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Japan

Solid Wood Products

Sick House: Fiberboard Imports

2004

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Report Highlights:

The government of Japan has begun regulating volatile organic compounds for some processed wood products, including fiberboards. This has particularly affected imports of medium density fiberboard, which are down in 2003.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tokyo [JA1]
[JA]

The government of Japan has begun regulating the off-gasses, volatile organic compounds (VOC), of some processed wood products, including fiberboard. Registration and certification requirements have affected the demand for fiberboard, particularly medium density fiberboard (MDF).

Imports of fiberboard, including particleboards hardboards, medium density fiberboard (MDF) and insulation-board, was 911,488 cubic meters (m3) in 2003, down 0.3% from the previous year. While OSB (Oriented Strand Board) imports, mostly from North America, were down 5%, particleboard imports generally, which accounts for 46% of the total fiberboard imports were up 2.6%. More than half of all fiberboard imports is MDF, which were 456,000 m3 in 2003, down 3.3% from the previous year, most of which was picked up by local producers already approved to meet new VOC certification requirements.

The principal suppliers, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Australia accounted for 86% of total MDF imports in 2003. Imports for New Zealand, Malaysia, and Australia were 234,000 m3 (down 1.2% from 2002), 110,000 m3 (up 0.5% from 2002) and 50,000 cubic meters (up 2.0% from 2002). Other factors affecting MDF imports included the shift of Japanese furniture production to offshore facilities, especially in China. As production moves offshore, so does trade for inputs.

The following table is a summary of Japanese imports by product line in 2003, including plywood imports.

Product Line	Volume (m3)	% Change (03/02)
Particle boards (OSB share)	415,125 (193,264)	+ 2.6% (- 5.0%)
Hardboards	39,902	+ 5.5%
M D F	456,047	- 3.3%
Insulation boards	414	- 36.0%
Total Fiberboard	911,488	- 0.3%
Plywood	4,575,672	- 8.3%
Total Wood Panels	5,487,160	- 7.3%

(Source: Ministry of Treasury/Trade Statistics)

End of Report.